2: Schram--67 M-4, 5(1915-1920) 1932 AE9 Monguor AE9
Historical Mongolia AH2

M 585 /61 cont'd/

[431 178] According to what they claim, in former times the bride's parents used to make the present of a handsome horse to the son-in-law at the moment of departure. The custom does not appear to exist any longer.

M [593] The bride's father and mother do not participate in the festivity, but her brothers, sisters, uncles, and aunts are all present.

When the bride is on the way, all the guests who stayed overnight follow in a group; the gift bearers wind up the procession. The bride laments all the way, leaning on the bag of straw placed on the horse's neck, her head always enveloped in the coarse veil. These tears, these sobs, constitute a real elegy. She addresses herself aloud to her parents, her brothers, her sisters; she has a good memory about each one of them; she calls to mind their goodness, the gifts; she recalls the animals in the stable, her paternal home... then she is M [604] afraid of the future, of her parents-in-law, whom she does not know; she is afraid of being cursed by her mother-in-law, afraid that the name of her mother will be used in order to curse her. Often in these elegies there are splendid sallies, very naive, very deeply felt; the M [607] girls also /62/ learn this kind of literature in their play; the sisters-in-law teach them, and they teach one another. It is an elegy based on life. Similarly touching ones are heard at burials. (1)

HM 585

1. Timkovski, Voyage, Vol. 2, p. 309 and following. On the preceding day, two lamas go on behalf of the husband-to-be to find out from the parents of the bride whether any obstacles have arisen (German translation: The Mongols do not have the custom of going to get the bride. The evening before the departure they content themselves with sending two men for....). As the day nears, the wife-to-be pays visits to her closest relatives and spends at least one night at the home of each of them having a good time, going walking with her friends, who

/73 cont'd/

16. Opening of the Daughter-in-law's Mouth

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784 Until now the wife has not yet opened her mouth; her head has always been enveloped in the veil until the end of the marriage ceremony. On no pretext has she been able to say a word since her departure from her home. All the guests have had their /74/ eyes fixed upon her; uttering a single word would be considered one of the most fatal omens for the future. She is even forbidden to satisfy her natural needs, and in anticipation of that she has abstained from drinking the day before.

607 Her mouth must be opened by the mother-in-law in person.
554
562 Led back into the nuptial chamber after the marriage ceremony, she has been served tea and bread still in silence. Then comes the mother-in-law, who sits down on the k'ang and tells her point-blank, "Starting from today you are forbidden to divulge anything that goes on in the family, and anything that will happen in the future. You will not repeat within the family what you will hear outside. A daughter-in-law's mouth must be 'hard' (do not tell anything) with respect to people outside, it must be 'flexible' toward her relatives."

585 The daughter-in-law answers affirmatively, her mouth is opened. They talk again together for several minutes. Henceforward the wife is permitted to talk with her maid of honor in the nuptial chamber; the women who are at the festivity go to wish her good day.

17. The Dinner

585
171 The guests of the two families have taken their places at the tables prepared for the dinner. (1) The maternal uncle, the go-

1. Shirokogoroff, p. 84: (A dinner is served in the Chinese style. A master of ceremonies conducts the proceedings.) The clan people and especially the family members eat after the guests. When the meal approaches its end, they bring to the bride's place the ritual meal